Rural electrification programme

*578. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a series of measures aimed at giving an impetus to electrify 80,000 villages in the country as part of rural electrification programme;

(b) if so, the details of measures Government propose to take in this regard;

(c) whether an action plan has been prepared in this regard and is before the GoM; and

(d) if so, by when the action plan is likely to be cleared by GoM and implemented?

THE MINISTER OF POWER (SHRI SURESH PRABHU): (a) to (d) The Government is considering a Plan of Action for accelerating the process of village electrification so as to achieve 100% electrification of all the remaining un-electrified villages numbering about 62,000 villages feasible to be connected with the grid by the year 2007. The remaining 18,000 'remote' unelectrified villages located in remote areas would be electrified using Non-Conventional Sources of Energy on a decentralized basis by the year 2012. The Action Plan has been endorsed by the State Governments during the Chief Ministers/Power Ministers conference held on 3rd March, 2001. The State Governments have also been requested to undertake a survey of un-electrified villages including 'remote'/tribal villages, and un-electrified dalit/tribal *bastis*. The hamlets would also be taken up for electrification in a phased manner. The 'Kutir Jyoti Programme' would also be revamped with suitable enhancement in the unit cost and modification in guidelines.

The Government had set up a Group of Ministers (GoM) to review all the existing schemes relating to electrification of villages, dalit bastis and benefiting other weaker sections and suggests modifications for accelerating the pace of electrification. Besides, the GoM would also review the future role and manner of

operation of Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) and its sources of funding. The recommendations of the GoM have since been received.

The Finance Minister, in his speech while presenting the budget for 2001-02 has announced the launch of a package of incentives to improve the power distribution system in rural areas. This includes completion of electrification of bulk of the remaining villages in the next 6 years; extension of assistance to the States for village electrification works under the Prime Minister's Gramodyog Yojana (PMGY) whose funding is being augmented; stepping up credit support from the Rural Electrificaiton Corporation to SEBs for speedy electrification of dalit bastis, households of scheduled tribes and other weaker sections of society; improving the quality of power supply in villages, augmentation of distribution networks in rural areas supported by REC under the Accelerated Power Development Programme; earmarking a sum of at least Rs. 750 crore out of RIDF for rural electrification works; and augmenting the resources of REC, by allowing it to float capital gains tax exemption bonds along with NABARD and NHAI under Section 54 EC of the Income Tax Act.

Construction of tourist lodges in Uttar Pradesh

†*579. SHRI MUNAVVAR HASAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated any comprehensive action plan for the year 2001-2002 for construction of tourist lodges (Yatri Niwas) in the country, especially in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the location-wise details of the projects which have been accorded priority after consultation with the State Government; and

(c) the State-wise amount of financial assistance provided for such projects?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR); (a) The Department of Tourism,

†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.